

OLC 69-0738

28 August 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Conversation with Mr. William Woodruff
re Chuyen Case

1. Today I met with Mr. William Woodruff, Assistant Chief Clerk, Senate Appropriations Committee, in response to his request for a review of the facts regarding Agency involvement in the Chuyen case. Woodruff explained that he had conveyed to Senator Russell the points on which I had briefed Woodruff on 12 August (see my Memorandum for the Record of 13 August), but Senator Russell had recently called Woodruff to express concern over the sharp differences between this version and allegations appearing in the press. I carefully reviewed for Woodruff the same points I had conveyed on 12 August while Woodruff made notes. In addition I explained in some detail the nature and limitations of the coordinating role of the Saigon Station in operations run by the Special Forces, and cited Army Under Secretary Beal's letter to Representative Rodino regarding the chain of command question. I added that the Agency had cooperated in the Army's investigation and the Agency officer with first-hand knowledge of the facts had testified at the "Article 32" hearing. I also said that the Agency officers concerned had made statements firmly denying ever having suggested or approved the agent's "liquidation."

2. Woodruff said he was reassured to know that what he had told Russell on the basis of my 12 August briefing was indeed quite accurate.

STATOTHR 3. Woodruff said Senator Russell had been appealed to by the family of one of the defendants, [redacted], and had been pressed to make a public statement on the case. Thus far Russell has refused but now feels he must say something.

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4. Woodruff added that Russell's initial reaction to press accounts of the case had been one of concern over the severity with 25X1 which General Abrams had dealt with the accused. Woodruff inferred from Russell's earlier remarks that Russell considered [] an outstanding officer who may have acted illegally, but for understandable reasons, and was being somehow made a scapegoat. Woodruff asked if I could throw any light on why Abrams had reacted so sharply.

5. I told Woodruff on a strictly "FYI" basis that [] had apparently misled MACV as to the facts and speculated that this might have aroused Abrams' ire. STAT

STATOTHR

6. Woodruff said he thought that, whatever the outcome, the case would be unfortunate from the standpoint of both the Agency and the Army since [] was an impressive and popular figure whose military career had been ruined, and unless additional facts were brought out it would be widely believed that he was being sacrificed to cover up for someone else. Woodruff said that if it were brought out in a trial that [] deliberately misled his superiors this would be hard on [] but it would take some of the heat off of Abrams and the Agency. STATOTHR
STATOTHR

7. Woodruff said he doubted that he would mention to Russell anything about []'s having misled MACV since it would be better for Russell to find this out from someone else. STAT

8. Woodruff said that Russell's office had received word that Army Secretary Resor wants to see Russell as soon as the Secretary returns, probably early next week, presumably about the Green Beret case.

9. Woodruff said that Russell was expected back in town sometime 25X1 Tuesday, 2 September, and Woodruff would tell him to expect a call from the Director regarding an early meeting of the Agency's Subcommittees, which Woodruff would recommend.

[]
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Legislative Counsel

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